

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 COME-00 ACDA-12 SY-05 MCT-02 HA-05
IO-13 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
EB-08 SIL-01 LAB-04 /117 W
-----020186 301544Z /42

R 301456Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5915
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MADRID 09978

BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEEC

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINS, PINT, SP
SUBJECT: FURTHER TERRORISM PROVOKES INCREASING TENSIONS

REF: MADRID 9871

1. SUMMARY: THE THREE ASSASSINATIONS REPORTED REFTEL
HAVE BEEN FOLLOWED BY A FOURTH, THAT OF AN OFF-DUTY
POLICEMAN IN IRUN (GUIPUZCOA). GRAPO HAS NOW CLAIMED
RESPONSIBILITY FOR TWO OF THE SLAYINGS (SANTIAGO DE
COMPOSTELA AND BARCELONA); IT IS ASSUMED THAT ETA PER-
PETRATED THE OTHER TWO (MONDRAGON AND IRUN), ALTHOUGH
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THE RITUAL COMMUNIQUE HAS NOT YET BEEN FORTHCOMING.
REACTION TO THE SLAYINGS HAS BEEN LARGELY PREDICTABLE,
ALTHOUGH THE TENSION ENGENDERED BY THE KILLINGS HAS ALSO
BROUGHT SOME UNUSUAL BACK-BITING. THE POLICEMEN'S
ASSOCIATION HAS CRITICIZED THE GOVT AND THE PARTIES AND
CALLED ON THE PEOPLE TO PRESSURE THE GOVT FOR "ORDER,
SECURITY AND JUSTICE." MADRID'S EL PAIS, TAKING A

DIFFERENT TACK, CRITICIZES THE POLICE FOR INEFFECTIVE INVESTIGATION OF THESE AND PREVIOUS TERRORIST ATTACKS, AND CALLS ON THE GOVT TO FIRE THE POLICE OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE. END SUMMARY.

2. THE MID-MORNING AUGUST 28 ASSASSINATIONS OF POLICE-MEN IN BARCELONA, MONDRAGON AND SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA (REFTTEL) WERE FOLLOWED LATE ON AUGUST 28 BY A FOURTH, THAT OF AN OFF-DUTY POLICEMAN IN IRUN (GUIPUZCOA). ALSO DURING THE NIGHT OF AUGUST 28:

-- A BOMB EXPLODED IN THE DOORWAY OF THE POLICE HEADQUARTERS IN SORIA (SORIA PROVINCE), WHICH IS LOCATED IN THE BUILDING HOUSING THE CIVIL GOVERNOR'S OFFICES;

-- SHOTS WERE FIRED AND AN EXPLOSIVE DEVICE WAS THROWN AT AN ARMED POLICE BARRACKS IN CORNELLA, AN INDUSTRIAL SUBURB OF BARCELONA; AND

-- TWO POLICE CARS WERE SET ON FIRE IN TARRASA, ALSO IN BARCELONA'S INDUSTRIAL BELT.

EACH OF THESE ATTACKS RESULTED IN PROPERTY DAMAGE, BUT NO CASUALTIES WERE REPORTED.

IN COMMUNIQUE DELIVERED TO A NUMBER OF NEWSPAPERS, CONFIDENTIAL

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INCLUDING MADRID'S EL PAIS AND INFORMACIONES, THE ULTRA-LEFT GRAPO HAS CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MURDERS IN SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA AND BARCELONA, AS WELL AS FOR THE BOMBING IN SORIA. ACCORDING TO THE COMMUNIQUE, THE ATTACKS WERE IN REPRISAL FOR THE CONDITIONS IN WHICH "POLITICAL PRISONERS" ARE BEING HELD IN THE PRISON AT SORIA AND THE WOMEN'S PRISON OF YESERIAS, NEAR MADRID (ACCUSED MEMBERS OF GRAPO DETAINED IN THOSE TWO PRISONS CURRENTLY ARE WELL INTO AN EXTENDED HUNGER STRIKE). SOME OF THE COMMUNIQUE ALSO ALLEGE TORTURE AND DEMAND THE WITHDRAWAL OF SPECIAL POLICE UNITS FROM THE PRISONS (WHERE THEY HAVE BEEN POSTED BECAUSE OF RECENT DISTURBANCES). ONE OF THE DOCUMENTS ALSO ASSERTS THAT AN EARLIER CLAIM OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SANTIAGO SLAYING BY A SO-CALLED ARMED GALICIAN LEAGUE (LIGA ARMADA GALLEGA) WAS A HOAX. THE TWO BASQUE COUNTRY KILLINGS (MONDRAGON AND IRUN) ARE ASSUMED TO BE THE WORK OF ETA, ALTHOUGH THE RITUAL ETA COMMUNIQUE HAS NOT YET BEEN FORTHCOMING.

4. THE POLICE APPARENTLY HAVE NO STRONG LEADS IN ANY OF THESE CASES. THE PRESS REPORTS AUGUST 30 -- AND

POLICE (DGS) OFFICIALS TOLD US PRIVATELY AUGUST 29 --
THAT BALLISTICS CHECKS HAVE FAILED TO TIE THE THREE
SUSPECTS APPREHENDED IN BARCELONA TO THE BARCELONA
SLAYING. THESE DGS OFFICIALS ADDED THAT THEY HAD
EXPECTED AN ESCALATION OF TERRORISM, BUT THOUGHT THAT
IT WOULD NOT COME UNTIL SEPTEMBER, AND THAT IT APPEARED
THAT THE THREE NEAR-SIMULTANEOUS AUGUST 28 MURDERS HAD
INDEED BEEN COORDINATED BY ETA AND GRAPO.

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5. MEANWHILE, WITH SOME NOTABLE EXCEPTIONS REACTION TO THE
ATTACKS HAS FOLLOWED A WELL ESTABLISHED PATTERN: THE
GOVT HAS RESPONDED CAREFULLY AND HAS DRAWN A VEIL OVER
ITS ACTIONS IN THE FOUR CASES; THE POLITICAL PARTIES
AND LABOR UNIONS HAVE JOINED IN CONDEMNING THE SLAYINGS;
AND THE FUNERALS FOR THE VICTIMS HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN
TENSE BUT LARGELY ORDERLY FASHION, ACCOMPANIED BY
SPORADIC ANTI-GOVT SHOUTS AND, IN BARCELONA, VERBAL
ABUSE DIRECTED AT GENERALITAT PRESIDENT TARRADELLAS,
WHOSE CAR WAS EVEN BANGED ON BY A FEW AGITATED POLICEMEN
AND CIVILIANS AS HE DEPARTED THE FUNERAL MASS.

6. BUT THE UNUSUAL BACK-BITING THAT ALSO HAS CREPT INTO
THE REACTION TESTIFIES TO THE INCREASED TENSION ENGENDERED
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BY THESE LATEST KILLINGS, AND INDICATES THAT PATIENCE
IS BEING SEVERELY TESTED ALL AROUND. THE NATIONAL
PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICEMEN ON AUGUST 29
DISSEMINATED A COMMUNIQUE LABELING THE CONDEMNATIONS
BY THE PARTIES AND UNIONS INSUFFICIENT, CRITICIZING
THE GOVT FOR HAVING GONE TOO FAR WITH PARDONS AND
AMNESTIES AND FOR NOT GOVERNING WITH SUFFICIENT
AUTHORITY, AND CALLING ON THE SPANISH PEOPLE "PUBLICLY
TO EXPRESS YOUR DEMAND FOR ORDER, SECURITY AND JUSTICE."
AT THE SAME TIME, EL PAIS HAS TAKEN QUITE ANOTHER, BUT
EQUALLY CRITICAL, TACK. IN ITS AUGUST 30 EDITORIAL, THE
MADRID DAILY BEMOANS THE INEFFECTIVE POLICE
WORK IN THESE AND PREVIOUS TERRORISM CASES, AND CALLS
ON THE GOVT TO GET RID OF THOSE POLICE OFFICIALS,
PARTICULARLY THE CONTROVERSIAL ROBERTO CONESA, CHIEF
OF THE ANTITERRORISM BRIGADE, WHO HAVE BEEN IN CHARGE
OF THESE UNPRODUCTIVE INVESTIGATORY EFFORTS.

7. SEPARATELY, EL PAIS SPECULATES THAT SUCH FIRINGS
WERE PRECISELY ONE OF THE ISSUES DISCUSSED DURING
SUAREZ' MEETING AUGUST 29 WITH INTERIOR MINISTER MARTIN
VILLA AND FIRST VICE PRESIDENT GUTIERREZ MELLADO, TO
REVIEW THE PUBLIC ORDER SITUATION. IN FACT, LA CORUNA
POLICE CHIEF GOMEZ MARGARIDA, RECENTLY TRANSFERRED TO
THE GALICIAN CAPITAL FROM BILBAO, WAS INDEED SACKED
AUGUST 29. BUT THIS APPEARS TO HAVE RESULTED FROM A
DECISION TAKEN SOME DAYS AGO, DERIVING FROM UNAUTHORIZED
AND CONTROVERSIAL STATEMENTS MARGARIDA HAD MADE ABOUT
CONTACTS WITH ETA DURING HIS STINT IN BILBAO.

8. COMMENT: DGS OFFICIALS HAVE TOLD US THAT THEY HAVE
NO LEADS AS TO THE AUTHORS OF THE ASSASSINATIONS OR
ATTACKS. THE FRUSTRATION OF NOT BEING ABLE TO APPREHEND
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THE TERRORISTS AND THEIR ANTICIPATION OF INCREASED
TERRORIST ACTIONS IN THE FUTURE HAVE LED TO GROWING
TENSION AMONG DGS OFFICIALS. THEY ARE ALSO DISCOURAGED
BY THE PRESS CRITICISM AND THEIR BELIEF THAT THE
GOVERNMENT HAS NOT FULLY SUPPORTED THEM. PARTICULARLY
HARD PRESSED ARE THE POLICE SERVING IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY,

WHO ARE PRIMARY TARGETS FOR TERRORIST ATTACKS AND WHO
FOR YEARS HAVE BEEN LOOKED ON BY THE LOCAL POPULACE AS
AN OCCUPATION FORCE. TODMAN

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